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## BRITISH RULE IN INDIA—II.

BY THE REV. J. P. JONES, D.D., MISSIONARY OF THE AMERICAN BOARD, AT MADURA, SOUTH INDIA.

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### II.

WE shall now consider a few of the most frequent charges brought against Great Britain in this land. None is presented with more readiness and warmth, or appears more warranted by facts, than the claim that the land is being denuded of its wealth, and its treasures carried annually in immense sums over the seas. It is concretely expressed by Mr. Dutt, in his recent work, "England and India," in the following words: "The annual exports from India exceed the annual imports of merchandise and treasure by over £20,000,000. For this excess of exports India receives no commercial equivalent; it is a steady drain on the resources of India." This, like many other remarks, has an element of truth commingled with serious error. He himself acknowledges that a third of this outflow is in payment of interest on money invested here by Englishmen, chiefly in railroads. This interest is at a low rate, often guaranteed by government. It is usually the only way in which the State can undertake large enterprises, not only necessary for the country, but which also do wonders for its development. Should that immense wealth of Englishmen which has flowed into India, and the work which it has wrought in the upbuilding of the land, be swept away to-morrow, India would drop instantly out of the realm of civilization and re-enter upon its semi-barbarism of the past. To claim that these investments by Westerners in the land are not a rich boon, and to speak of the interest received upon the same as an unjust drain upon the country, seems irrational. If the wealthy men of this land were only prepared to take up such public work and invest their money at low or moderate interest in enterprises for the public weal, the

charge might seem less unreasonable than it is. But native wealth cannot be made to flow into such channels. In this district, where the writer has long lived, there is much need of a railroad as a famine preventive through a much neglected portion of the field. For years the road has been surveyed at government expense, and it has been shown that the investment would be fairly remunerative; and the native community has been strongly appealed to, more than once, to invest in so necessary and important a public work. Within the neglected area through which the road is to run, there live a class of native money lenders who have means enough to build the road ten times over. And there are two petty Rajahs also living in the district. The two latter, while squandering their own patrimony, are content to petition the government to have the road built. These money lenders, on the other hand, decline to spend a rupee on such public works, as they can more than quadruple the interest by money lending to their miserable countrymen. After thus patiently waiting for years, the people are greatly rejoiced now to learn that English capitalists have come into the breach and will build the road at an early date. It will be an untold blessing to the million residents of that region, and to none more than the grasping, selfish money lenders and the spendthrift Rajahs. And yet the meagre income of this investment will be regarded by some as a drain on the country!

Another third of the sum above mentioned is consumed in the support of the army. This is truly a heavy burden, and there is reason to believe that it is much too serious a charge upon so peaceable and indigent a people. Imperial interests have caused this item to grow ominously of late years; and this has led the best friends of India to protest against making this poor land bear the largely growing expense incident to the protection of the Empire from outside dangers and enemies. There is no doubt that Russia's threatening approach to the north of India is a mighty argument in the mind and mouth of the martial defenders of the Empire in favor of the subjugation of the turbulent tribes on the northern frontiers and of the erection of mighty defences. But if this is necessary it is rather for the integrity of the British Empire than for the safety and defence of India; and the expense should in good part be borne by Great Britain herself. Sir Henry Brackenbury, a late military adviser to the Viceroy of India, re-

cently remarked, with justice, before a Royal Commission appointed to apportion expenditure as between England and India: "The foreign policy of India is directed entirely from England by Her Majesty's government, and it is the part of British foreign policy generally to secure Great Britain's rule over her Empire. If we desired to maintain British rule in India only for India's sake, then I think it would be fair to make India pay to the uttermost farthing everything that it could be shown was due to Britain's rule over India. India affords employment to thousands of Britons, India employs millions of English capital, and Indian commerce has been of immense value to Great Britain. Therefore, it seems to me that India, being held by Great Britain not only for India's sake, but for Great Britain's sake, the latter should pay a share of the expenditure for this purpose." In any case, there is little doubt that the whole army of India, at its present size and weight, should not hang as a millstone around India's neck. And the sound sense of justice which characterizes England gives ground of confidence that she will assume this just burden as soon as the present commission will report and reveal the situation. If this is not done, the other alternative of a speedy reduction of the army, which now numbers 75,000 Britons and 150,000 Indians, will become necessary. The army in India is, of all departments, the most vulnerable to attack, both on the score of expense and character. The British army is certainly the greatest trial to the Indian, and brutally rides roughshod over all his sensibilities. If "Tommy Atkins" could only be left at home, with safety to British interest in this land, it would help largely to improve the situation between the two races. It would also save England from the terrible disgrace of immorality which the army is instrumental in carrying as a plague wherever it goes. Awful, indeed, is the prevalence of the social vice in the native community itself. But the English army spreads the demoralization in a most disgraceful way wherever it is found. And the worst aspect of the whole question is the apparent inability of those at the head of the army and of government to strike at the root of the evil. They assume that the evil is irremediable, that the soldier is born to this special sin and must be indulged in it and protected in the indulgence. The consequence is that nearly half the army to-day is *hors de combat*, and no punishment whatever is inflicted upon the misguided son of passion for disquali-

fyng himself for service. How much better and more effective it would be, from the standpoint of morality and of military discipline, to say plainly to this son of Mars that he is engaged and supported to defend the country; that to disqualify himself for that service by sinful indulgence is not only unmanly and unjust to his employer, it is also a breach of military discipline, for which he will be severely punished every time he transgresses. Such a summary and wholesome course would save England from much of its present disgrace in the eyes of, and sins against, a heathen people, and would be more effective than a whole code of "Contagious Diseases Acts."

The opium and the abkary business is one which has drawn forth large criticism. From the moral standpoint the critics have a very strong position. The evil which the opium traffic of India has inflicted upon China—against her will, too—has been enormous. The large army of opium eaters which it has created, only to destroy them with a terrible death, has long been an argument to which no nation of England's position and pretensions can render satisfactory reply. In like manner, the State monopoly of the drink traffic is neither honorable nor wise. It not only gives unwonted and unwarrantable dignity to a disreputable business; it also inevitably involves the State in the business of making a large army of drunkards in the land. It is not enough for her to reply that if the trade were in private hands the people would drink just the same. Even if that were true, it seems hardly proper for so august a body to become the sole manufacturer and vendor of the demoralizing stuff. But it is not true that the people would drink all the same if the government restrained the business instead of promoting it. To take up a traffic like this for the revenue there is in it, is to trifle with the higher interests of the subjects and to become instrumental in the corruption and misery of the people whom it is bound to protect. It is questionable whether any other civilized government has so involved itself in such unworthy means of creating a revenue. Doubtless, opium and drink represent, morally, the weakest part of this government. Of course, the all important defence lies in the revenue thus acquired. These two items of revenue, as is too well known, flow more easily than any others into the depleted treasury of State. To give these up, in behalf of what is termed a sentiment, is to necessitate the imposition of other heavy taxes. This is an aspect of

the question which has too easily silenced and secured the acquiescence of the Indian community. But its evil is great and is spreading. The drink curse is rapidly becoming one of the crying problems of India. It was slanderously remarked, some years ago, that if England then left this country the only monuments of its life left behind would be broken whiskey bottles. There is indeed ground to-day for the charge that, if England were to abandon the land, it would leave as the saddest monument of its past an immensely increasing army of whiskey drinkers. This vice is growing at a most alarming pace among the Indians who are in authority—especially the Brahmans—men who until recently would no more defile themselves with liquor than they would eat beef or cross the ocean. Ten thousand times better were it for the State to renounce all such traffic and the price of blood which accompanies it. It cannot safely, for the sake of revenue, sacrifice the highest interest and permanent good of the people.

The recent utterance of the Archbishop of Canterbury on this subject should be heeded by the State. "The true principle of morals," he says, "is to have nothing whatever to do with that which is shown to be necessarily productive of evil. The English nation caused the opium evil in China, and we are responsible for that evil. I also protest against the principle of raising revenue by temptations to evil. It might be right for a government to pause before interfering with private trade; but in this case we ourselves are carrying on the evil trade. Such a thing on the part of a great government is, I think, without a parallel in the whole extent of the world."

The subject of taxation is one which the critics of the State are prone to dwell upon. It is, however, difficult to understand why this matter should be pressed, unless it be on the ground, apparently maintained, that the poverty of the people should exempt them from any of the burdens of taxation—a theory beautifully generous to the people, but fatal to the maintenance of any government. The salt tax does certainly seem cruel in its severe pressure upon the very poor, and yet it is the only way whereby this very large part of the community can be reached at all and made to contribute its mite to the State which protects it.

Comparing present taxes with those of the past, we should certainly expect heavier imposts now, because the government furnishes to-day as an equivalent of protection and blessing infinitely

more than former dynasties did. And yet, Sir W. Hunter has ably and clearly shown, from a comparison of taxes levied by the present and by the Mughal governments, that the modern Hindu is vastly better off than his ancestor of two and three centuries ago. To-day  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is collected in land tax; under the Mughal rule they had to pay from 33 to 50 per cent. Beside this, the Mohammedan imposed various other taxes, many of them on non-Mohammedans as a religious penalty. Nor were the Hindu governments a whit better, and even to-day the Native States are much harder upon the people than is the British Raj. The Famine Commission (the highest authority on the subject), in its exhaustive report of 1880, writes: "In the majority of native governments the revenue officer takes all he can get, and would take treble the revenue we should assess if he were strong enough to exact it. In ill managed States the cultivators are relentlessly squeezed, the difference between the native system and ours being mainly that the cultivator in a Native State is seldom or never sold up, and that he is usually treated much as a good bullock is treated, *i. e.*, he is left with enough to feed and clothe him and his family, so that they may continue to work."

If we pursue the comparison to that with European peoples, Indian taxation would seem but a trifle. Even placing English taxes side by side with India's, we shall find instruction. The average income in the United Kingdom is £40, while the tax assessed is 44s., or  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In India, alas! the average income is only 36s. But then the tax is only 1s. 9d. per capita, which is a trifle less percentage than that for England. Here again we are not impressed with any injustice of the people. Indeed, when we remember the vast efficiency of the government of to-day, as compared with any in the past, we are impressed with the reasonableness of the tax assessed.

### III.

We shall now hurriedly glance at some of the blessings conferred by England upon this land.

The least valuable, even if the most marked and manifest, is the material progress which meets one on all sides. Already, the splendid railway system upon which travel is as comfortable as, and perhaps cheaper than, that of any other country in the world, has extended 20,000 miles and reaches the remotest parts of the land. No other Eastern country lends itself so easily to the globe

trotter for travel and observation. And these throbbing arteries carry life and enterprise to all portions of the land. And many regions not yet made thus accessible will soon listen to the neighing of the iron horse and feel the pulsations of new life thereby. Two hundred and fifty million pounds have been expended in this work alone.

But better, if possible, than these roads is the grandly developing irrigation system which brings security of life and works prosperity wherever it reaches. Thirteen million acres are now artificially cultivated under this system. The last great enterprise in this line is the "Peryar Project," in South India. It was grand in its conception, perfect in its execution and is rich in its blessings. It consists in the diversion of a large river which vainly poured its treasures down the western mountain side into the Arabian Sea, causing its water to flow into the eastern plains to fertilize the thirsty land as far as the Bay of Bengal. It embraces the second largest dam in the world, a tunnel one and one-quarter miles long through the mountain, and many miles of distributing channels. It will irrigate at least 150,000 acres for rice cultivation and will feed 400,000 people. The writer lives in the heart of the region thus fertilized and refreshed, and can appreciate the joy of the people, who also stand astonished before the magic power of these white people who do for them what, they say, even their gods failed to accomplish.

Add to this the water works which are rapidly covering all the important towns of the land, and which save many thousands of lives annually.

In the town of Madura, where the writer lives, terrible cholera epidemics were of annual occurrence. Their devastating work we shall never forget. But during the last decade—since the water works were completed—this demon of diseases has lost its hold, life has resumed its preciousness, and sanitation has become a blessed reality. This grand effort to spread the blessings of good water throughout the land is the surest way to prevent the terrible scourges of famine and plague, and to add a large premium upon life and health.

Looking at the commerce of the Victorian reign alone, we see a growth of 1,000 per cent. in the imports and exports of India. The export of tea alone has risen from nothing to seventy thousand tons, and that of cotton from nothing to 220,000 tons. There are



now in the land 150 cotton mills with 150,000 laborers. Three million tons of coal are annually mined, and gold mines yield one million pounds, sterling, every year. It may indeed be said that India has now, for the first time in its history, taken a place as a land of manufactures, trade and commerce.

Political progress is also very marked. Before the British reign, India had never experienced the first taste of representative institutions. To-day, the query which arises in the mind of disinterested persons who know and love India is whether political rights and liberties have not, of late years, been conferred too rapidly upon the people. It should not be expected that a people who, by natural taste, instinct and unbroken heritage, are the children of the worst kind of autocratic and absolute forms of government, should acquire in an age or a century wisdom or aptitude to rule themselves. Taking the mass of Hindus, they ask no more, and seek nothing better, than a wise and kind paternal government. In this, as in all else, they love to be led; and they follow easily.

But there is a small and growing party of the soil who have aptly learned many of the lessons taught them by the rulers. The best acquired of all these lessons is that of the power of agitation and of the efficacy, among the Anglo-Saxon race, of the cry for human rights. The only difficulty is that one might suppose, from the language of some of these men, that England has not yet conceded to worthy Indians any of those political privileges which every Anglo-Saxon subject demands for himself. As a matter of fact, we see in all the municipalities a form of popular government such as not all Western countries enjoy. The power of franchise in the election of municipal commissioners is vested in all those who may be possessed of the least modicum of property. Even women enjoy this franchise. And it is a curious fact that natives in South India are protesting to-day, in the newspapers, against the granting of this power to women, because, they say, the power is exercised only by dancing girls and other public characters. To those who watch carefully the working of this municipal franchise and see how easily and speedily the natives have adopted all the vices and tricks of the representative system, it does not, by any means, seem an unmixed good. And the hardest critics of the system that the writer has met have been intelligent and loyal natives, who believe that this meed of self-government is fraught with evil. The District Boards also are composed almost entirely of native

gentlemen, and these have large powers in the administration of the internal affairs of the land. Moreover, these municipal and local bodies, together, elect members for the Provincial legislative bodies, where they enjoy recently enlarged powers of interpellating the government—a power which, by excessive use or abuse, they may soon forfeit. To all this must be added the freedom of the press, which also has recently been abused by the dissemination of seditious sentiments, but which adds immensely to the power of the people. Then the “National Congress” is a peculiar institution, which, while it gives scope to the political aspirations of many natives, adds, by its very existence, to the lustre of the British reign in the land. Just imagine, for a moment, such a Congress existing under Russian rule! It is true that the chief work of the Congress, in the past, has been to criticise and abuse government. By this it has alienated many of its best friends. Still, even as a public censor, it has doubtless done good, and it offers to the discontented a wholesome vent for pent-up ill feeling. It is also a remarkable gathering and illustrates one of the wonders which this government has accomplished. To think that, out of the babel of Indian tongues, there should gather together in one place annually some three thousand native gentlemen, to discuss state questions and to criticise one of the most modern of all governments in the pure English accents of Addison or of Macaulay! What an object lesson of progress in itself!

Nor is Great Britain as remiss, or as selfish, as many would lead us to believe in the distribution of the loaves of office. There are only 100,000 Britishers in this land—one to every three thousand of the population. Of these only 750 are found in the higher offices of government. In the Provincial services 2,449 natives are employed in high judicial and administrative posts. It is a significant fact that, out of 114,150 appointments, carrying Rs. 1,000 annually, 97 per cent. are in the hands of natives. To all offices below that of a Governor of a Province, natives are eligible. As Judges of the High Courts and as members of the legislative bodies, not a few Indians are now found; as they are also in the Indian Civil Service, which was so long exclusively filled by Anglo-Indians. It hardly appears how England can hold this great land to herself, and as a great member of her Empire, with fewer of her own citizens than are now found at the helm. Nor does it yet appear that a strong, efficient and acceptable government can be

maintained by a large reduction of this force. I use the word "acceptable" advisedly; and it is certainly the business of Great Britain to discover and consult the wishes of the people—not the hungry office seekers—in this matter. After many years of observation and living among the people, the writer is convinced that nine-tenths of the people would be prepared any day to vote in favor of the relative increase, and not the decrease, of the European official force. The people have found them to be just and honest. They know that they can be depended upon to administer justice with an even hand, and that they are incorruptible. In their own native officials they have no confidence. They have found, alas, too often that justice is sold to the highest bidder. The "middle men" who arrange such matters are too well known as the accompaniments of native courts of justice. It is true that some native officials are above such venality. But the writer knows how general is the want of native confidence in natives. Many a time has he been importuned to use his influence to have cases transferred from the jurisdiction of the native to the Englishman. And the reason invariably given is that "the white man will not accept bribes and will give justice." Indeed, it may be said that the chief difficulty which confronts the Government, in its great work, is that of saving the people from low, mercenary and unprincipled native officials—especially those of the lower and lowest grades. The police department is corrupt to the core. The common people dread the police almost more than they do the highwayman; for the constable rarely touches a case without making something out of the transaction, and is expert in manufacturing cases. It is hard to imagine how a department can be much more corrupt than this. And yet it is difficult to suggest a way of improving the department; for the system is not to blame, but the wretched class of men who have to be employed. What India needs to-day, above all else, is an honest, faithful, efficient class of officials. And the presence of the few English dignitaries does ten times more good to the land in purifying and toning up the service than their salary is worth.

The educational advance of the country has been quite phenomenal.

It is sadly true that, at present, only one male in ten, and one female in one hundred and sixty, is able to read. It is also true that, owing to the poverty of the country, such an excellent

and efficient system of popular education as the United States enjoys is an impossibility. Government in the main tries to aid and encourage private bodies in the educational line, and is supposed to conduct only a few model institutions of its own. It is also well known how opposed the people, even the Brahmans, have been to female education. And yet there are to-day 3,500,000 youths attending the public schools. And, of these, one-ninth (400,000), including 75,000 girls, are found in mission schools. There are 140 colleges affiliated with the few examining universities of the land. And in these are found 17,000 students, of whom more than 5,000 graduate yearly. Among the colleges the Madras Christian College stands supreme, with nearly 2,000 students in all its departments.

Under the influence of this educational work, which is conducted in such a way as to add supreme emphasis to an English training, there is a growing host of young men who are almost crazed with a passion for English culture and degrees. It is one of the problems of the day to direct the mind of this increasing army of university graduates to other professions than the over-crowded government service. There is a persistent feeling among these youth that it is the business of State to supply them with lucrative posts upon their graduation. And it is the disappointed element of this class which furnishes so many of the discontented, blatant demagogues who are almost a menace to the land.

Yet this educational work is one of the potent leavening influences of the land and is helping greatly in carrying quietly forward one of the mightiest revolutions that have been witnessed in any land. In its trail follows closely the social elevation of the people. The relaxation of the terrible caste system, the elevation of woman and her redemption from some of the cruelties and injustice of the past; the loud and general desire for a many-sided social reform—these and many other things bear unmistakable testimony to the new social life upon which the country is entering. It is true that a great deal of hollow cant and mawkish pretense joins in this chorus. Many prominent men eloquently proclaim, upon the platform, the glories of progress and the sacredness of individual liberty. The next hour they grovel as the abject slaves of debasing customs in their homes, and bend submissively to the reactionary dictates of their ignorant and superstitious grandmothers. But there is a small and growing body of men who

are tired of such loud-mouthed hypocrisy, and are demanding an all-round and heroic advance in all matters where reform is needed. And their voice will prevail.

Religiously, India has entered upon a new and wonderful era; not simply, or chiefly, because of a visible and strong tendency towards Christianity. The religion of Jesus is certainly making encouraging headway. Its more than two and a half million adherents in this land furnish abundant cheer and hope for its rapid and early triumph in this land of the Vedas.

Deep tides of influence, invisible to, and unfelt by, any save those in the country, are moving mightily towards the end of Christian hope and aspiration for this great people. The desire of India for Christ is not articulate, nor is it fully conscious of its trend. Even a strong feeling in the minds of many is peculiarly anti-Christian and pro-Vedantic. There is a cry from many for the conservation of the ancestral faith and for a hearty return to the faith of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-gita. There is among such a fierce antagonism to all that is Christian, and especially to the missionary. But these noisy few are not the people; nor are they always sincere in their cry. The great excitement of a year and a half ago has passed. It was then that Vivekananda returned in triumph from his American campaign through which he claimed that he had gained numberless converts to his Vedantic faith. He led many to believe that Hinduism had suddenly waked up from its slumber of ages and was entering upon a glorious era of world-wide conquest. That wave has now subsided, and the yellow-robed "Swamy" with it.

Among the evidences of the religious progress of this era, are found more than twenty laws enacted by this government for the abolishment of cruelties carried on under the sanction of Hinduism. Not only Suttee, infanticide and thuggism, but other hideous and nameless evils have been prohibited; so that this ancient faith has put on an appearance of respectability, which would puzzle its devotees of a century ago could they return to see it now. Witness also the many Somajes which add picturesqueness to the religious life of the land. Perhaps the most noted, though not the most popular, is the Brahmo Somaj. The members of this new eclecticism and religious reform are not many, but they wield a large influence and they reveal a part of the general discontent with the religious past of the land.

Thus, to sum up, England has done bravely and well the mighty work undertaken by her in this historic land. She has not been, and is not now, without failings; and her line of progress is studded with many errors. But she has been faithful to her trust and has carried it out in no narrow, selfish way. The warm and deep loyalty of India bears testimony to this; for native sentiment reveals marked appreciation.

Mr. Dutt, an Indian and a retired member of the Civil Service, in his recent book on "England and India," remarks: "We have thrown in our lot with a nation, not only one of the greatest on earth, but also one of the most progressive. . . . Surely the history of India during a hundred years has been emphatically a history of progress. . . . The times are with us, and the signs of the times are so clear that he who runs may read."

Great Britain cannot be too careful in correcting her errors in her Indian rule and in studying to solve well the large and vital problems before her.

But she certainly merits all praise from the world for the heroic work done here during the last century and a half and the marvelous results achieved. And she deserves the supreme gratitude of a great people whom she has raised out of the depths of semi-barbarism and carried, in many respects, abreast of civilization and progress. This gratitude she has not only won; she is enjoying it, too, from the hearts of the many millions of this stolid but appreciative people.

J. P. JONES.